

FOCUS

A Look at the Maricopa County Juvenile Court



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Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County

Spring 2001 Edition

Safe Schools travels to Bosnia

The summer trip that Safe School Probation Officer Tawny Peralta has come to look forward to every year isn't about relaxation or getting away from work.

For Peralta, travelling to war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina during the past two years has been about taking her job with her to show educators how to teach change.

Courtesy of an international exchange program, Peralta has taken concepts she uses everyday in the Safe Schools Program at Edison Elementary School in Phoenix to Bosnian cities to help the education system there foster democracy.

"We teach the importance of starting with children when they're young," Peralta said. "Bosnian educators get it. They know if you're going to change the country, you have to start with the children."

The Safe Schools Program is a countywide program that places police officers (known as school resource officers) and juvenile probation officers on school campuses. In addition to establishing a presence on campus to enhance safety and prevent delinquency, probation officers provide Law Related Education — instruction on rules, law and the legal system — to show children what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Peralta, a probation officer of nearly 11 years, is one of several U.S. trainers that makes the overseas trip through



Safe School Probation Officer Tawny Peralta (above) has gathered many mementos during the past 2 summers traveling to Bosnia to help educators there teach democracy. Snap Shots: (Right, top to bottom) Peralta said many beautiful buildings in Bosnia are marred by the effects of war; Peralta often travelled through towns that have yet to be repaired from the damage — towns too poor to repair the roofs over the people's heads; The teachers so far have embraced what they've learned from the program which sent Peralta to Bosnia; Peralta said she hopes to return to "beautiful" landscape this summer.

the Civitas at Bosnia and Herzegovina Summer Training Program, a program run by the Center for Civic Education and the U. S. Information Agency. Peralta became acquainted with the program when a delegation from Bosnia visited Edison Elementary in 1999. Through contacts made during the visit, that summer Peralta was invited to train Bosnian teachers based on the one of the elements of the Safe Schools Program: Law Related Education.

After receiving permission from Juvenile Probation Administration, Peralta embarked on her two-week overseas training trip.

Specifically, Peralta, and others from across the U.S.,

train teachers to teach the "Foundations of Democracy." The four-part program focuses on responsibility, justice, privacy and authority.

Director of the Juvenile Probation Department Community Services division, Hellen Carter, said she is excited to have the reach of the local Safe Schools program extending overseas.

"It's exciting that what works in an inner city school in Phoenix could have the same kind of impact in Bosnia," Carter said. "We're all really proud of Tawny. Number 1, because she has the courage to go to Bosnia, and Number 2, because she has skills that can literally save lives."



The exchange program has been ongoing since 1996 and aids educators in writing and training for a new civics curriculum. In addition to adding new curriculum, Peralta said Bosnian educators are moving from a rigidly traditional format of lecture, notes and tests to a more interactive style of teaching.

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Adoption tradition for East Valley family

The Hughes' concept of family has taken on new meaning during the past five years.

The family of 10 has swelled to a family of 22.

Thanks to foster care and adoption, which has become a Hughes family tradition, twelve children, including 10 siblings, were legally added to the Hughes family tree within the past two years.

"We don't look at it as any big deal," said Shirley Hughes, who with husband Van adopted 10 brothers and sisters during the summer of 1999.

Van and Shirley became nationally recognized following their record-setting adoption, which started through the Department of Economic Security's Foster Care program. Out of the media glare, the Hughes' biological son, Jason Hughes and his wife Shellie, quietly and privately adopted two children in May 2000, and plan to adopt at least one more child in the future. The Hughes other biological son Jeff has two children of his own.

Although the additions are relatively recent, the sense of family has deep roots.

"I call them my brothers and sisters," said Jason of the 10 siblings his parents adopted. He now has the sisters he never had. "I can't really think back without them, I am just used to them now."

Jason, a police officer, has always wanted to adopt children. While toying with the option of adopting through a private agency, he and his wife decided to follow his parents' example by becoming foster parents first, shortly after Van and Shirley took in the first of the 10 siblings they would later adopt.

Charlie, 4, has been with Jason and Shellie for four years. Alyssa, 3, has been with the family for 3 years. Both adoptions were made final in Juve-



Left: Jason and Shellie Hughes hold their adopted children, Charlie (left) and Alyssa. They officially became a family last year, following the path Jason's parents Shirley and Van Hughes. Shirley and Van received local and national attention when they adopted 10 siblings at once, in Juvenile Court in 1999.

Below right: Jason, Charlie, Shellie and Alyssa Hughes join the family dog in a family moment. The family became one in May 2000.

"Every child needs love. Every Child needs to be shown how to love."

— Shirley Hughes,
Adoptive mother of
10 siblings

nile Court on May 15, 2000.

Charlie and Alyssa are like many children their ages. They climb, they scream and they get excited and restless when someone new comes around. They are told not to hit, not to slam the toy car on the glass table and to stop pulling at a guest's shirtsleeve.

"You can tell it was easy to bond with them," Jason says showing pictures of the children as infants, with a father's gleam in his eye.

"We always considered them our children but (on May 15) we knew they would be ours for the rest of our lives," Shellie said.

The Hughes' sibling adoption was final July 29, 1999, after four years of foster care, during which time the children

slowly reunited under the Hughes' roof after being separated following the removal from their biological mother's home. The children are: Francisco Lopez, 18, Maria Hughes, 17, Asucena Baumea, 16, Estevan Lopez, 14, Augustino Baumea, 13, Juan Baumea, 11, Jose Baumea, 10, Stephanie Hughes, 9 Veronica Hughes, 7, and Donicio Gonzalez, 5.

"They've given as much to us as we've given to them," Shirley said, adding that she is encouraged by the belief that the kids have a good chance at success in life. "They have an opportunity to break free from falling into the same patterns their parents did. Now they're seeing what a real family is like and before, they didn't have a clue."

The mass adoption brought Van, Shirley and the 10 siblings a flood of media attention since the adoption was made public, some of the attention resulting

in rewards and gifts for their undertaking. After appearing on the Rosie O'Donnel show, the Hughes were given a new van to replace the one they were using, which had more than 400,000 miles on it, to take the kids around town. From news shows to talk shows, the family has made numerous television appearances and continues to travel to adoption conferences across the nation. Jason, who purposefully took a low profile during the sibling adoption, said his parents' dedication to making appearances have been to further the cause of adoption.

"I think (the media attention) helped kids who are up for adoption to see there are people who will really adopt them," Shellie said.

Superior Court Commissioner Thomas Jacobs legalized Van and Shirley's adoption and was associated with the case for four years.

He said it is not uncommon to find couples who have



previously adopted children come back into court to adopt more. Never, however, has he seen an adoption of the magnitude of the Hughes adoption. Commissioner Jacobs said that with Jason Hughes also adopting children the Hughes family is helping to place adoption and foster care at the forefront of the public's minds.

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A fair to remember



Some with hopeful eyes and others with curious minds, people crowded into the into the Superior Court Old Courthouse for the first Maricopa County Adoption Fair to Celebrate Adoption.

For 42 children, the day meant that they were finally a part of a family as several families finalized their adoptions at the event. The normally closed adoptions were open to the public in order to promote adoption. The second floor of the courthouse filled quickly with public in search of information on adoption through various agency booths or through a number of educational sessions on adoption.

Superior Court, and various private and government adoption agencies organized the fair, the first of its kind in Maricopa County. Fair organizers hope to continue the event this year.



Clockwise from top left: Many children were dressed in their best for the occasion; Adoption Fair organizers discuss the fair in progress; Cake was offered in celebration of a special day; More than 40 families made their way through the Old Courthouse first floor hallway en route to finalizing their adoptions.



Foundation grants help to kids in Court

Juveniles in Maricopa County who are on probation or involved in dependency cases now have a little extra push to get them by when needed.

For the past year, a \$10,000 grant from the Arizona Community Foundation has been available to the Maricopa County Juvenile Court to provide needy juveniles with basic essentials they normally don't have.

Clothes, shoes and hygiene products were among the items juveniles are able to purchase with the grant, which was given to Juvenile Court in January 2000. The Arizona Community Foundation, established in 1978, is a partnership of non-profit organizations and indi-

vidual community donors that seek to find solutions to community needs.

Juvenile Court Dependency Programs Administrator Bill Callahan said once the grant was awarded, administrators worked with the County Board of Supervisors to get approval to distribute the funds. Distribution began in April 2000. A four-member committee meets monthly to consider applications for funds. Probation officers and Court Appointed Special Advocates submit the applications on behalf of the juveniles. The committee's approval is based on need. If a juvenile is on probation, the board also considers the juvenile's probation performance, in addition to the need.

Callahan said most requests are granted.

"Most of the juveniles we get requests for are very needy," Callahan said. "Generally, it is pretty fair to say that if a need is demonstrated, we'll fund it."

Callahan said the requests have ranged from \$27.50 to \$300, the maximum that can be given. Most of the requests last year were for apparel and personal products. Other requests were more unique.

One juvenile requested and received a bike, with a helmet and a lock, which the juvenile used to get to drug screenings and drug intervention group meetings. Another juvenile sought guitar lessons and books to learn how to play the guitar. Another juvenile

sought fees and equipment to join the cheerleader squad. Baby blankets and clothes, maternity-wear and school fees and supplies are also among the requests approved last year.

The committee received an additional \$4,000 in November 2000 to augment the original \$10,000 grant. As of November 2000, the committee approved less than \$3,500 of requests since April.

"The grant provides a resource where there wasn't one before," said Danna Quinn, Judicial Services Administrator in the Juvenile Probation Department, and committee member. "I think it is wonderful that probation officers and CASAs have somewhere to turn for those requests."

Bosnia, From Page 1

She said quality teacher-student interaction was rarely practiced and still remains foreign to some.

With the exception of destruction from the war, Peralta believes Bosnian and American educators are facing the same challenges in helping at-risk children overcome hardships.

"The kids in Bosnia have been through a horrible war," Peralta said. "They've been victims of poverty, prejudice and discrimination ... it would be easy for them to just give up. I cannot help but see similarities between many of the children we work with in the inner cities and the children in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

Peralta's time in Bosnia was encompassed training and travelling. In two trips so far, she has traveled to Sarajevo in East-Central Bosnia, Mostar to the south, Bihac to the northwest and various spots in between. She says the landscape is beautiful, but often marred by the destruction of

war. Driving from city to city, Peralta said the moment can change from jovial conversation and laughter to silence and tears as the group passes through a city demolished by war and too poor to rebuild.

"The first summer, nobody talked about what they went through. The people were still too raw from the experience," Peralta said. "Last summer I noticed people opening up more."

The teachers' attitude and dedication toward their students, as well as their kindness and gratitude, amazed Peralta. She said the teachers understand the change will be slow, and so far have embraced the training.

"The teachers I have had the privilege to train fill me with hope for the country," Peralta said. "They are so dedicated to their students. Some did everything they could to continue to teach during the war. Without pay, classrooms or even supplies, they found students to teach."

"They've been victims of poverty, prejudice and discrimination ... it would be easy for them to just give up. I cannot help but see similarities between many of the children we work with in the inner cities and the children in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

— *Tawny Peralta,*
Safe Schools
Probation Officer

The kindness and gratitude she experienced on the trip often came in the form of gifts and mementos from people she met. Many of the gifts she received line her office walls or sit on countertops. From the teachers, to the drivers to the translators, Peralta said the many friendships she has made in Bosnia, makes it difficult to leave when the time

approaches. She has received numerous postcards from teachers and hosts from the different cities where she has traveled. She still communicates to one of the translators she met on her first trip weekly via e-mail.

Peralta said she hopes to receive word of another trip this summer. In two years of the program, Peralta has given all she knows on the subject of law-related education and interactive teaching styles.

With every trip, Peralta receives in return an added sense of passion for working with kids at Edison Elementary, where she has been a probation officer for six years.

"We have the opportunity to do pure prevention, to reach these children and teach them they have to be responsible citizens," Peralta said. "Some of these kids don't get out of Phoenix at all. I want them to realize there is a world outside of Phoenix — that the choices they make can change the world if they want."



Shellie and Charlie Hughes take a moment to play. Shellie and Jason Hughes adopted Charlie, 4, and 3-year-old Alyssa in May 2000.

"I'm glad it is getting the publicity it's getting," Jacobs said. "It's all the better if it helps to get kids out of shelters and out of emergency homes. I think it's great."

With the media attention slowly fading away, Shirley said family life is returning back to normal. Although having 12 new faces around is already daunting, as Shirley can attest during back-to-school shopping, more faces could pop up in the future.

"We want to adopt one more, but we also want two more of our own," Jason said. "But if somebody called us today and said hey we have one, we would adopt. Right now I don't care if I have a (biological) child, I would like my wife to experience it, it would nice to experience it, but even though they're not our biological children, I consider them mine. It's just like a father would feel about a child."

Shirley said if she and Van ever hit the lottery, they'd move to a large property and take in as many kids as they could.

"Every child needs love," Shirley said. "Every child needs to be shown how to love."

JUVENILE COURT NEWS BRIEFS

New season of rotations affects Juvenile Court Bench

Starting this spring, the makeup of the Juvenile Court Bench began a new season of change.

Most recently, Judge Eileen Willett rotated to the Criminal Department of adult court.



Judge Eileen Willett

Willett has been assigned to the Durango facility for nearly 3 years, one of which as a commissioner. Judge Alan Kamin, previously assigned to the Civil Department at the downtown facility, took Judge Willett's spot on the juvenile bench at the Durango Facility. Judge Kamin was first appointed to the Superior

Court bench in 1983. Willett will take office at the downtown court facility.

Long time Juvenile Court Judges Rebecca Albrecht, Pamela Franks, and Juvenile Presiding Judge Maurice Portley will be taking assignments in adult court in June 2001. Judge David R. Cole, currently assigned to the criminal department, will rotate to the Southeast Juvenile Facility in place of Judge Portley. Judge Cole was appointed a judge in 1989, and has since served in the Criminal, Family, Civil and Special Assignment Department.



Judge Alan Kamin



Commissioner Elizabeth Yancey

Once appointed, new judges will assume the spots vacated by Judge Franks and Judge Albrecht. Judge Linda Scott will become the new presiding juvenile judge.

Another change was the retirement of Commissioner Elizabeth Yancey in January.

Commissioner Yancey was first appointed a commissioner in 1987, and has since served in the Criminal, Family Court and Probate/Mental Health Departments. She rotated to Juvenile Court in 1998, and was assigned to the Southeast Facility in Mesa.

Administrator leaves

Former Juvenile Court Administrator Caroline Lauth-Owens may have left Juvenile Court behind her, but she remains within the realm of Juvenile Justice.

Lauth-Owens recently left Juvenile Court to take a position with the Arizona Foster Care Review Board (FCRB), after more than two years as Juvenile Court Administrator.

As Program Manager of the FCRB, she will be working with the Arizona Legislature regarding child welfare issues, among other duties.

Maricopa County currently has more than 40 Foster Care Review Boards in place. Each board is made up of five volunteers appointed by the county Juvenile Court Presiding Judge. Each county has a FRCB.

The volunteers regularly review every case with a dependent child in an out-of-home placement.

Scout's Honor



Judge Maurice Portley's photo is featured across town as part of the Boy Scouts of America "Today's Scouts, Tomorrow's Leaders" campaign.

Even while on the bench Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Maurice Portley is all over town.

At bus stops, and billboards across town, Judge Portley was featured in the "Today's Scouts, Tomorrow's Leaders" campaign by Grand Canyon

Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Among the Judge's co-honorees: Arizona State University President Lattie Coor and Arizona Rattlers Head Coach Danny White.

Judge Portley achieved Eagle Scout in 1970 in Sierra Vista, Ariz.

JUVENILE COURT JUDICIAL OFFICERS

Southeast Court Center
1810 South Lewis St.
Mesa, AZ 85210

Presiding Judge Maurice Portley	602.506.2306
Judge Rebecca Albrecht	602.506.3727
Judge Silvia Arellano	602.506.3649
Judge Dennis Dairman	602.506.1855
Judge Emmet Ronan	602.506.0438
Judge Linda Scott	602.506.2610
Commissioner Thomas Jacobs	602.506.4203

Durango Court Center
3125 West Durango
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Associate Presiding Judge Pam Franks	602.506.3528
Judge Janet Barton	602.506.5340
Judge Thomas Dunevant III	602.506.2050
Judge Brian Hauser	602.506.6086
Judge Alan Kamin	602.506.3157
Judge William Sargeant III	602.506.3663
Commissioner Robert Colosi	602.506.3366
Commissioner George Foster Jr.	602.506.3892

Superior Court of Arizona
Juvenile Court
1810 S. Lewis
Mesa, Arizona
85210-6234
